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The Dedication Poem

Some without reason;
some without rhyme;
some that are nameless –
these bastards of mine.

Susan Roberts

2.





3.

David's Lullaby

There are no sheep. This room's not a fold.
And no Good Shepherd stands at the threshold.
The words of my songs are not gentle;
The rain falls soft, not kind.

But the sun
Can shine,
And sleep comes.
It shall come.

Susan Roberts

Season Stereotypes

The leaves are turning:
Sun trees argue with green ones
In rustling voices.

Snowflakes softly drift
To cover up the landscape.
Where is my garden?

Birds fly north again
Crying loud to wake the trees
And other sleepers.

The blue-hot skyband
Curves to meet the cool blue sea;
Sand crabs play beach tag

4.

Intermission

After the sun is down
Before the night is come
A blue-black sky
closes

like a curtain on a bright
rehearsal
stage.

But there yet a glow
at the bottom
where those lights peep through,
omen of the real
Performance
by those greater stars.

Ginny Slack

Entering Autumn

Summer looked around the corner and beheld there.
Autumn
Pulling bronze scarlet and orange out of moth balls to dust
Sharing out a brisk little breeze to air;
Digging in a corner deep in Mother's garret
Finding a jar of leafy smoke and steam to rise from chocolate
Taking inventory of his stock of cheeks red, chestnuts, chilly toes;
Frying hard to pull Jack Frost from hibernation.

Summer looked and saw these things.
So she put one hand over the sun and
Gathered sunburned noses with the other
Sighing softly, Summer bid adieu to her audience

Ginny Slack

and I wait
wait for her to walk down
the sidewalk from her womb.
and the trees;
the trees move
casting their shadows on the sidewalk
making me think
that she ...
but no.

only the street lamp and I
remain constant.
Then she comes, her shoulders sloping gently,
hidden here and there by the shadows.
But as the light from the street lamp
falls on her face,
I see the sadness there
and I can only blend
into the trees again
as she glides slowly by.
and I wait

and the trees
and now they do not move

C. Meedy the Vallee

I've taken to calling you
my Rose Period

A color that denotes
excitement and pain
You made me aware
of both these things
like the many different hues
in a rose—from the
deepest on up

You turned
You know—your eyes
tend to view your
environment in those
shades too.

5.
Mine tended to be too
blue for you.

But—you will be my
Rose Period
and I will try to
remember that roses have
their seasons

So now I know you
as my Rose Period in
the kaleidoscope of my
life
Camille Regan





My mind lies writhing
hungry, dying,
bound and tortured
in the caverns of my apathy.

Silently screaming, the mind
within begs to be set free.
My mind, bursting in its turmoil,
forces me to break my silence
or slip slowly into darkness,
and all the hells of public scorn
cannot be worse
than the hell of dying slowly
in myself.

Cursing the day I first could see
comes roaring, rumbling, grumbling
from my deepest pit
the fostered scream
that lightning rips
the rotting bondage from my gut
and tears the thunder
from my throat
to meet the soaring clouds
of freedom... and peace.

and my silence screams no more.

and i light a candle
and raise my mournful requiem
for all the minds
who died,
silently screaming.

Meredythe Vasse



Ber. Jamieson

Corduroy Chameleons,
Creeping like passified giants
through cracks in the mildewed heat
- Teri Combee

8.



Road Song

I'm the dirt beside the concrete,
the way along the way.
I shall outlive all the asphalt;
I shall outrun every day.

Glass-encased and sun-glassed,
They course away the time
On the perfect man-made marble
As four wheels keep perfect time.

I shall watch and never tire;
I shall listen, never sleep;
I shall grow wise from their follies,
Sing silence to

Big rig rumbles, Beetle whines,
Cattle car screams, bastards'

lines thrown out

from pick-ups, Big Macs,
Mustangs, Corvairs and
Corvettes.

The fugue of the wheels
and the fugue of their minds
Can't lull me to sleep
like wind through the pines.

Susan Roberts



I held my hand up into the spotted shadows of filigree leaves. The edges of my world began to fade together like an oil painting. I sat very still, and slowly became a part of the picture. From my new found viewpoint I watched the sun glint on top of the water. A duck flapped his wings and then turned upside down into the water, and my oil painting faded away into sharper reality.

I walked into the house to help Ma with supper. She stood before the stove. Wisps of wet hair framed her blushing cheeks; with the back of her hand she brushed trickles of perspiration from her forehead. "Honey, go pick some turnips for dinner; Kyle and Gayford were sent to bring in the cows." I wanted to pout and say, "They always get to bring in the cows, I have to always pick the turnips." But I said nothing and walked outside to pull a bundle of dark leaves and a few purple roots. I rubbed the dirt from the deep colored skin of the root and bit into its sweet white crispness. Bits of sand gritted between my teeth.

From the path around the lake came five brown and white spotted cows, each followed by a similar calf. Several yards behind lagged two hay headed boys, bare foot and in overalls; each dragging a long stick behind him. Sporadically one or the other youngster would yell "hey there" to the cows they were herding in.

The pink glow of the setting red sun gently drifted down over the farm—covering the two hay headed boys and the white flapping ducks and me.

I went inside and washed the turnips. Side by side Mama and I worked on dinner. I hummed softly as I blocked the white meat of the root among the cooking green leaves. Mama wiped her hands on her big white apron that Gayford had given her last Christmas and walked to the screen door. She cupped her hands to her mouth. "Kyle... Gayford... Grady... supper!"

With a final burst the sun sprinkled the room in shades of red and then slowly faded, leaving behind the purply grey dusk.

We sat down to dinner. Pa said grace like always. "Thank the Lord for dinner." The meal was noisy like always—Pa slurping his coffee from the saucer where he poured it to cool, the boys jabbering about a jack rabbit Duke and Pete chased and almost caught, Ma telling Kyle to eat his turnips and Gayford to quit sneaking carrots onto Kyle's plate. We had pie for dessert made with some elderberries the boys had picked yesterday.

There was a knock at the door. Pa got up and opened it.

"Grady, whoever it is tell them to come have some dessert."

"Why, it's Turnby's boy. Come on in Mark, have supper with us."

"No thank you sir. I just ate." He stood inside the door shifting his feet nervously. He was tall and skinny, his ears stuck out, way out, and his brown hair went up in a cowlick where he parted it. His ears and face were turning a deep red, and I knew he had just taken a bath because he smelled faintly of bought soap. His hair was still damp, and he kept brushing it off his forehead.

"Have some dessert?"

"No, thank you Mrs. Oliver, I just finished eating." I could tell he really wanted some pie and was just saying that to be polite.

"I just come to tell you we found our cow. She just went off to have her calf. So you don't have to keep an eye out for her anymore."

"Well, it was mighty nice of you to come walking all the way out here to tell us," said Ma, smiling as she stood up to clear the table. "Why don't you stay awhile and visit?"

"Well, I got to get home directly." He stood at the door turning red and clearing his throat. He stuck his hands deep into his pockets. "Annie, I heard that cat of yours was going to have kittens."

"She already had them." piped in Kyle, between bites of pie.

"Don't talk with your mouth full."

"Aw, Daddy."

"No back talk either."

"Annie, I'll finish up in here. Why don't you go show Mark the kittens." I stared at Mama with my mouth halfways open. Usually she fussed about me not helping with the dishes.

"Do you want to see them Mark?"

"Yeah."

"Let me get a sweater. They're in the barn." I ran to my room and grabbed my brown sweater. I don't know why, but I stopped in front of the mirror and brushed my hair till it shone. I bit my lips and pinched my cheeks and ran out to the kitchen where Mark still stood by the door.

He whistled as we walked to the barn. I found the wall switch and flicked on the lights. We walked over to the far corner where a cardboard carton had been fixed for the new family. Two of the kittens, a black spotted and a yellow striped, pushed their noses to their mother's stomach searching for a nipple.

I picked up the one that was practically all white except for two black paws. "I call her Bootsie; she's my favorite."

"I like her best too."

"Here." I handed the kitten to Mark. He held the mewling animal in two big cupped hands. He rubbed the soft fur against my cheek and then against his chin.

"I guess you're looking forward to the hunting season opening." I said to break the silence.

"Yeah." There was a long pause. "Did you get all your Math finished for Monday?"

"Almost, what was your answer to number three."

"I can't remember, but it wasn't the same answer as the one in the back."

"Neither was mine." I could think of nothing else to say.

"Maybe the book's answer was wrong."

"What?"

"Maybe the answer in the back of the book is wrong."

"Yeah." We put the mewling kitten back in the box. I stood rubbing my palm across the coarse, nubby fabric of my dress.

"Annie, are you going on that Sunday School picnic at Reeve's Lake?"

"Yeah."

"Me too." A few minutes of embarrassed silence passed. I could feel my cheeks burning. Mark's ears stuck out more than ever and turned a deeper shade red.

"Mark, I guess I better go in."

"Yeah, I got to be going too." Mark turned off the light and latched the door. On the way back to the house he held my hand.

"I like night's like this." My voice sounded a little higher than usual.

"Yeah, the stars are all out. Look, there's the Big Dipper."

We reached the steps. I stood on the bottom step. "Well, Mark, goodnight. Tell your folks we all said hey."

"Yeah, and Annie, you tell your folks I said goodnight."

"Yeah." We stood looking at each other in the semi-dark. For some reason his ears didn't seem to stick out so much in the dark. For an instant the frogs seemed to sing louder than usual. Mark stood on his tiptoes and kissed me. For a brief moment his lips brushed gently against mine. I could hear pans rattling in the kitchen and Pa playing horse with the boys, and Mark breathing kind of hard. And I just stood on the steps with my eyes closed being kissed by a boy and listening to the night.

"Well, goodnight," Mark's voice kind of cracked a little.

"Goodnight." I watched him walk down the path into the dark. He reached the front gate and turned around.

"Annie?" he yelled.

"Yeah?" There was a short pause.

"I like your kittens." Then he turned and ran down the path turning right toward the road.

I sat down on the steps and softly touched my lips. I smiled and hugged my knees against my breasts and hummed a song I'd just made up and never had heard before.

The next day the top world is my world
 I climb to [your world of the wind] My limbs stretch as far as they can
 I lie in the sound with my spine.... As though it was the womb of my birth.
 Reach. I drink the earth the soft breast of all existence.
 I protect



For Jamieson

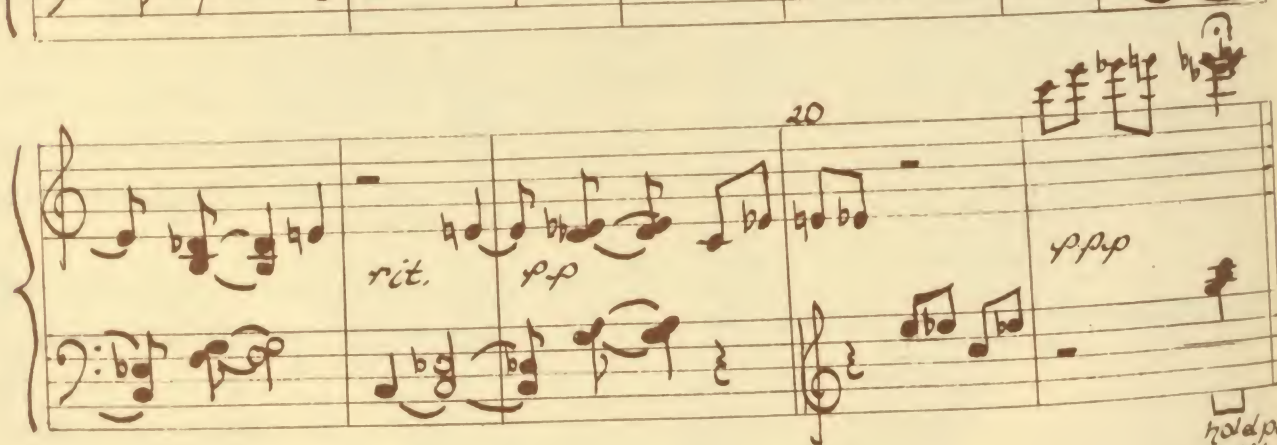
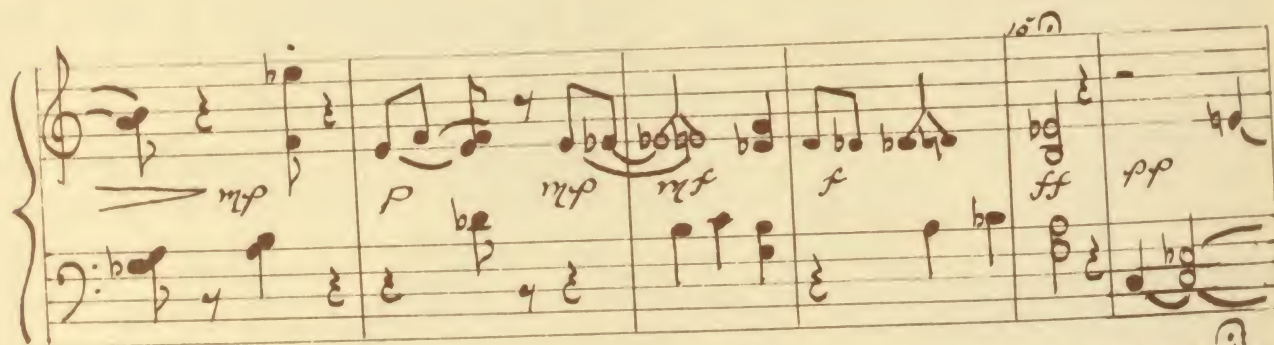
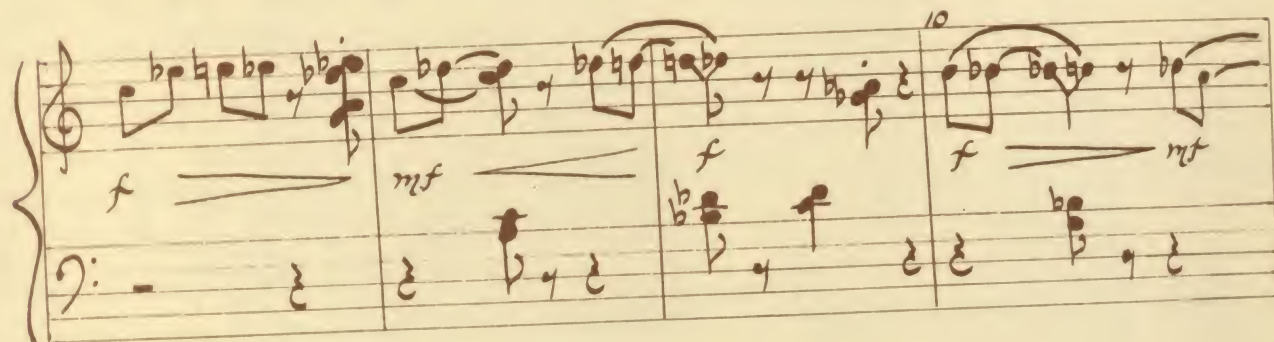
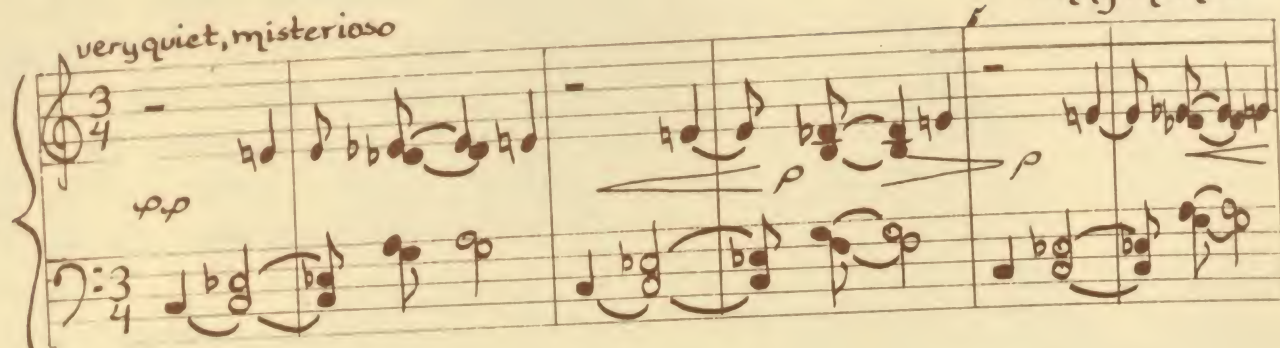
Space —
 I open to you
 Enter me
 Enter me

[I am a stranger in your land.]

Twilight

Penny Thomas

very quiet, misterioso



hold pedal
until chord
dies away

Ann Marrooe
after
Drüer



i have strangled in the winds
of many summers
and choked down the rot
of winter trodden thought
but
i will return to the mountains
for a day
(say hello to the haze;
wish the river well)
and leave
having told no one but the
tight-stemmed reeds
what it is to see
the gut-filled
blood of my youth
spilling free
crushed under the
weight
of a dream

The Loser's Ode

Someone sang my songs before
I could write them.
I'll never score. They took my songs
And changed the beat. Made the words run
On swift silver feet.
Mine weren't happy. Made folks cry.
Soured milk and greyed the sky.
Songs for the asking? No, not me.
Ask Arthur Simon or Garfunkel P.
Mine I'll give to horny cats
to be sung to the moon through the bloody black.
Don't listen. They've been sung before
I'd written them.
I never score. There are too many cats,
Too many moons, too bloody much black.

Susan Roberts

